

THE MESSINGER

AUGUST 2025





Summer Office Hours: Monday—Thursday 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Closed Fridays May 23—September 7 107 2nd Street Southeast Aitkin, MN 56431 Office: 218-927-2028

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It's August, and we have a tendency this month to begin speeding back up, ramping up for the busy Fall schedule. But this month, I encourage you to intentionally slow down, and continue to enjoy this beautiful place that we call home.

or I share with you a reflection called "Seek, Be, Do," by Dr. Dee Stokes.

At the end of every year, I SEEK the Lord about a theme for the upcoming year. It was very clear to me that the Lord was speaking to my heart to proclaim that 2025 would be the year of the SEEK, based on Matthew 6.33. I believe wholeheartedly that if we SEEK God's kingdom first, then all other things we need will be added unto us. He shall supply all our needs according to His riches in glory (Philippians 4.19) and desire (as they align with the will of God). Then, about midway through the year, I asked myself and others, what does it look like to SEEK? What do you think? Most times when we think of SEEKING, we think of DOING something. I want to propose that SEEKING is NOT DOING!

I prefer the term means of grace over spiritual disciplines, although I use them interchangeably. When we refer to spiritual disciplines, it is almost as if we are DOING something ourselves and not God working in and through us to accomplish His good pleasure! Means of grace sounds more like the Lord DOING the work, and we are beneficiaries of what He has already done and already called us to. Have you come up with what SEEKING looks like yet?

When I teach about Cultural Intelligence and Cultural Values, one of the cultural values is Being vs. .DOING. BEING is more about affirming people and relationships, where DOING is more about accomplishing tasks and managing processes. We identify cultures that are more BEING (Latin America) and those that are more DOING (Good ol' USA). Cultures that are more DOING tend to work after work. For instance, we go home and paint the house on the weekends after working 40 or more hours during the week. Conversely, cultures that are more BEING tend to take long holidays, work shorter weeks, and enjoy life more!

"What are you trying to say, preacher?" I am trying to say that the Lord is teaching me that SEEKING is BEING! You see, God is not calling us to DO more. We get it wrong all the time. We have enough to DO. The Lord created us first to be in relationship with Him. I think sometimes He couldn't care less about some of the things we DO and are passionate about. SEEKING requires spending time, listening, heeding, and obeying.

Let's also add trusting as the new SEEKING. SEEKING looks like not having a care in the world, being on (vacation), and not knowing what the next assignment is.

I am learning so much in this year of the SEEK by BEING still and allowing God to fight my battles and DO all the work behind the scenes. He spoke to me recently and told me, "I am giving you the desires of your heart." This is not the first time the Lord has spoken this to me, but I immediately wept when I heard it again.

My challenge to you, busy, always moving about, thinking of the next project, citizens of the kingdom, is to just BE Relax. Take a deep breath. Go play golf. Go to the beach. Get a massage.

Here are a few other ways to SEEK and BE. For the nursing mother feeding at 2 am, don't worry about how much you prayed or read your Bible, but enjoy the solitude while feeding and find the spiritual practice in that. For the college student, find time to walk across campus without hurrying, to relieve social anxiety... God is with you in that, too. For the construction worker, take deep breaths every hour. I heard Pastor Sheryl Brady say, "God gave us breaths in increments..." So, while you are taking those deep breaths, thank God for each one of them! Get out of your head and go do something fun today, then get back to work for the kingdom. It will do your body and some good. BE encouraged!

See you in church!
Pastor Reggie



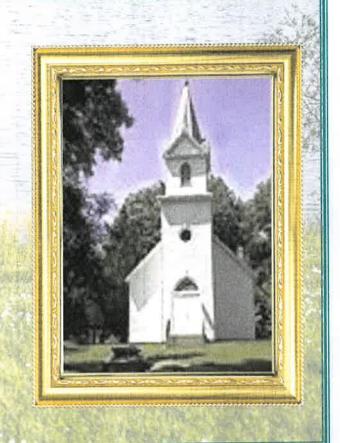
Healthy Vision Tips for Young People: Take Care of Your Eyes

- 1. Keep your eyes healthy by eating a well-balanced diet-eat different types of fruits and veggies, especially leafy greens like spinach, kale, and collard greens. Fish like salmon, tuna, and halibut have been shown to help eye health, too.
- 2. Exercise to maintain a healthy body weight is important to eye health. Being overweight or obese can put you at higher risk for diabetes and other conditions that can lead to vision problems.
- 3. If your vision is blurry or if you squint a lot or if you have trouble seeing things at school, you should tell a parent or teacher. You may need to have an eye exam.
- 4. Glasses help you see better, especially when they're clean and free of smudges. Learn how to clean your glasses and how to store them when you're not wearing them to keep them safe from damage.
- 5. Always wash your hands before putting them close to your eyes, especially if you're putting in or taking out contact lenses.
- 6. When you play sports, use chemicals during science class or at home or mow the lawn, you should wear the right protection to keep your eyes safe. Many eye injuries can be prevented with better safety habits, such as using protective eyewear.
- 7. The sun's rays can hurt your eyes, so choose sunglasses that block 99-100% of both UVA and UVB radiation from the sun. And remember, you should never look directly at the sun.
- 8. Spending a lot of time looking at a computer, phone, or TV screen, can tire your eyes. Give your eyes a rest with the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, look about 20 feet away for 20 seconds.
- 9. Smoking is as bad for your eyes as it is the rest of your body and can put you at risk for serious eye issues, which can lead to blindness.
- 10. If anyone in your family has issues with their eyes, you should talk about eye health with your family to help everyone stay healthy.

Submitted by Marcy Mateyka, Parish Nurse

Worship Service
& Potluck Picnic
August 10
Potluck: 5:30 pm
Worship Service
immediately following
the picnic

Maria Chapel







Relief today. Resilience tomorrow.

Lutheran Disaster Response, a ministry of the ELCA, provides support for communities recovering from devastating floodwaters by responding to urgent needs, providing emotional and spiritual care, and supporting cleanup and long-term recovery.

We are church together, and together we can reflect Christ's light and hope to our neighbors in their time of need.



Scan the QR code to give today.

Floods are one of the most common disasters in the United States. Your generosity supports survivors on the long road to recovery.





STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY REPORT

The Annual Appeal Committee met twice with a focus group in the last months to hear what people have to say about why they attend and support the church. The committee wants to know what people are thinking about and dealing with in their lives. We don't worship or even belong to a church in a vacuum. Everything that goes on in life "is grist for the mill." Another way may be to say that all we experience, see, do becomes part of the sausage. How then does the church figure into all that is happening? Is the church, "the communion of saints', a source of strength, respite, refuge, renewal and impetus for our lives?

The Annual Appeal that takes place in the fall may look different this year. It may or may not carry the name "Consecration Sunday". It may have a more holistic flavor to it as it gathers members into the annual event.

The Mission Endowment Fund Committee continues to look at ways to inform the congregation about the blessings, advantages, opportunities to use whatever financial resources they want to pass on to be a legacy for themselves and the church. The church website will have a Mission Endowment Fund site with information about a number of ways that one can be thoughtful in sharing the financial resources they want to pass on to make a long-lasting different in the world. It can also be a place to look at ways that individuals, families, groups can take more control of what they want to do with their finances.

On a weekly basis, in *First At First*, short articles or notices will help expand what Jesus meant when He said, "Take care of these until I return."

Time and Talents is an everyday event that all people and of course, Christians are involved in. In response to a question asked about who was his neighbor, Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan. We expect the parable to end with "this is your neighbor". But parables are a bit like swallowing a hand grenade. The meaning seems obvious and then it on a second level explodes. Jesus ended the parable with this question, "Who proved to be a neighbor to the man found lying in the road?" Who can you prove to be a neighbor to this day? A smile, a friendly "hello", opening a door, taking time to ask and really mean it when you say, "How are you?" Being a neighbor! Your Time and Talents at work!



80-Plus Birthdays in August

Marlene Abear August 4

Kenneth Johnson August 13

Larry Shaskey August 13

Carol Forsberg August 13

Phyllis Johnson August 29

90-Plus Birthdays in August

Richard Jackman August 2

Lewann Sotnak August 3

Ronae Baldwin August 7





AUGUST WORSHIP SERVICES

All Sundays in August

9:00 am Worship Service

10:30 am Brief Worship Service

Coffee Fellowship immediately

following 9:00 am service

Come join us!

All ages welcome!

Join us for the Blessing of the Backpacks Sunday, September 7th at 9:00 am Enjoy coffee and cookies immediately following worship and register your children for Sunday School. You may also pick up your registration form in the church office or register on our website at flc-aitkin.com under the Children, Youth & Family button at any time.





Do you have old school or craft supplies you'd like to give away? Our Sunday School could use: And so much more! Markers Pipe Cleaners Please bring to the church Crayons **Pom poms** office. Colored Pencils **Straws Contact Justine** Sharpie Markers Paint Nordick at Colored Paper Paint supplies justinenordick@gmail.com Ribbon Beads with any Crepe Paper Balloons questions.

7th & 8th Grade Kickoff

Mini-Golf

Sunday Afternoon

September 7th

Who will be the winner?

Mark your calendars now!



7th - 9th GRADE
AFFIRMATION
ORIENTATION
September 10

Save the date!
Wednesday Night Faith
(WNF)
Starts this Fall
September 17th



2025-26 Sunday School News!

We are so excited to be switching some things up for next year with a new start time and fun activities!

Regular Schedule:

10:00 am - Treats and fellowship

10:10 am - Opener in the sanctuary

10:13 am - Classes in education wing

10:45 am - Songs together in God's Garden Room

10:52 am - Games in the gym :)

11:00 am - End (pick up in gym)



Special Dates for Children (Pre-K to 4th Grade)

Mark your calendars for next year!

***Kids Choir dates still TBD

Date	Event(s)
0.17	Rally Sunday!
Sept 7	*All Ages Blessing of the Backpacks*
Sept 14	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00
Court 24	*3 yr old Bible Milestone* - 9:00 service*
Sept 21	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00
Sept 28	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00
	1st/2nd Grade Worship Milestone - 10:15
Oct 5	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00
Oct 12	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00
Ott 12	*Kindergarten My Church Milestone*
Oct 19	NO Sunday School – MEA Break
0-4-25	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00
Oct 26	ou a chairtean December Connect
	Start Christmas Program Songs!

Special Dates for Children (Pre-K to 4th Grade)

Nov 9	NO Sunday School - No school on 6th & 7th				
Nov 16	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00				
Nov 23	Christmas Program Practice - 10:15-11:00				
Nov 30	NO Sunday School – Thanksgiving				
Dec 7	Christmas Program Practice - 10:15-11:00				
Dec 13	*Christmas Program Dress Rehearsal - Time TBD*				
Dec 14	*Christmas Program - 9:00 service*				
Dec 21	NO Sunday School – Christmas Break				
Dec 28	NO Sunday School – Christmas Break				
Jan 4	NO Sunday School – Christmas Break				
Jan 11	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00				
Jan 18	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00				
Jan 25	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00				
Feb 1	Sunday School - *Congregational Meeting??				
Feb 8	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00				
Feb 15	NO Sunday School - No school on 13th & 16th				
Feb 22	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00				
Mar 1	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00				
	Pre-K Prayer Milestone - 9:00 service				
Mar 8	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00				
	4th Grade Prayer Milestone - afternoon				
Mar 15	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00				
Mar 22	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00 * Camp Sunday!*				
5.4-v-20	NO Sunday School - No school on 26th & 27th				
Mar 29	*3rd Grade Communion Class - afternoon*				
Apr 2	*3rd Grade First Communion Milestone - Evening Maundy Thursday Service				
Apr 5	NO Sunday School – Easter				
Apr 12	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00				
Apr 19	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00				
Apr 26	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00				
May 3	*2nd Grade My Bible Milestone* - 9:00 service				
	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00				
May 10	Sunday School - 10:15-11:00				
May 17	Last Day of Sunday School - 10:15-11:00 *Grad Sunday				

Sunday School Questions? Contact Justine Nordick at justinenordick@gmail.com

Finance Committee

Financial Summary through June 2025

2024

2025

	LUZT	2025
General Operating Income - YTD		
June Budget Expectations-YTD (Historical Average)	178,041	175,501
Variance to Budget Expectations - YTD	213,981	198,299
Actual Expenditures - YTD	(35,940)	(22,798)
Percentage of dollars received for period	193,391	188,825
to dollars pledged	90%	90%
Unpledged Dollars Rec'd – YTD (Regular Offering)	47,778	48,598
Building Fund Income - YTD	18,741	16,283
Building Fund Expenditure - YTD Campership Balance	22,562	22,562
	10,187	9,747

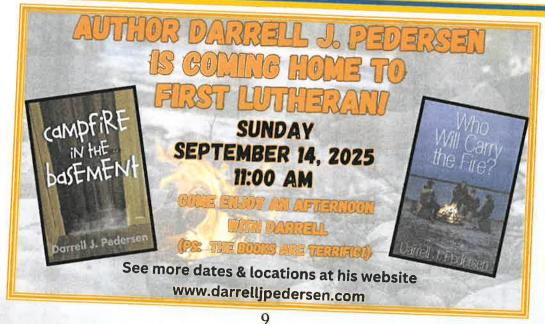
In comparing General Fund income with actual expenses, you will see a shortfall of \$13,325.

In using the straight line method of calculating the budget, general fund income was about \$31,665 under budget.

Using the historical average method of calculating the budget as shown above, you will see that the variance was a negative \$22,798.

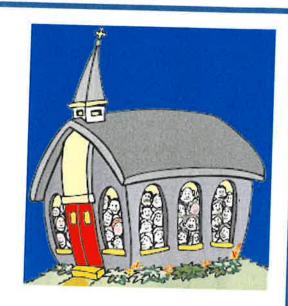
Regular offering was \$34,188 under budget expectations through June, and less than 2024 by \$6,994.

General Fund offering for June was \$33,794. Historically, June results in 7.41% of general fund giving. This amount would be \$30,702.



ATTENDANCE

Week of	6/29	7/6	7/13	7/20	
Sunday	94	58	73	63	
9:00 am	(In-person)				
	7	7	7	7	
10:30 am	(In-perso	n)			
Wednesday					



Wednesday

6:00 pm Wednesday night worship will resume in September

9:00 am (YouTube)

51 29 43 46

ALL YOUTUBE ATTENDANCE IS BASED ON YOU TUBE VIEWS AS OF July 24. A VIEW MAY BE MORE THAN ONE PERSON PER VIEW. WEDNESDAY NIGHT IS ALL IN PERSON ATTENDANCE.

· August Extra **Mile Mission** Focus



If you'd like to donate please go to our website www.flc-aitkin.com or send a check to the church









THE TREK TO SOLAR PANELS AT FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

First Lutheran-Aitkin has the following mission statement: "With God's love, we embrace one another, our neighbors and all creation". The third pillar of this statement ("all creation") led to the formation of a Creation Care Ministry and its approval by our church council in 2014. The next year, a Creation Care Covenant was developed and approved by our council. Based on this congregational foundation, our Property and Creation Care Ministries began to work together with the aim of reducing First Lutheran's environmental impacts.

Our first joint project was to conduct 2 environmental audits in 2016, one by a private consultant and one by a free MN Pollution Control Agency program (RETAP). These audits recommended numerous changes to our electric, heat and water systems, some of which were accomplished by our Property Ministry over the next few years, including: replacing most incandescent and fluorescent lighting with LED's; installing motion sensors in hallways and restrooms; replacing old toilets with more water-efficient models; and, reducing the number of water heaters and heaters in entrances. These changes have provided a 17% reduction in electricity consumption; a 35% reduction in electrical demand charges; and a 68% reduction in water consumption.

In 2018, The Creation Care Ministry suggested that the Property Ministry request an assessment of installing solar panels at the Church. Property contacted a solar contractor and for \$250 they did an assessment and submitted a proposal for a solar array at a cost of \$93,000 with a payback of 30 years. We felt that the proposal was not feasible at that time.

In 2022, Bob Munneke of the Creation Care Ministry contacted a solar developer out of Brainerd to work with us to develop a proposal for solar. At that time, there was a 30% tax rebate incentive to install solar but since churches are tax exempt, we were not eligible for this incentive. Their proposal at that time was to put together a group of investors to install a solar array for us, they would get the tax incentive, and the church would get the energy produced to offset our electrical costs. But there were too many hoops to jump through on this proposal so we did not pursue it further.

Then new legislation changed the incentives and it included rebates for Churches. The first proposal we received under the new rebates was for \$135,300 less incentives of \$54,120 for a net system cost of \$81,180. Other solar companies were contacted for proposals. Most were of similar design and costs, still more than we felt we could afford.

So, back to the solar developer in Brainerd. In late July of 2024, he brought over a solar contractor from Brainerd. We met in the south parking lot and discussed what we might do. They brought back a proposal for 52 panels with a cost of about \$62,000, with incentives of about \$24,000. This proposal seemed like one we could put together and afford but it wasn't until we held a meeting in November of those members who were interested solar that we got serious in proceeding.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

CREATION CARE



Green Tips (factual information about environmental problems and causes) can now be viewed at the Synod's EcoFaith Network website, under the "Green Blades Rising Newsletters" or "Green Tips" links.

(www.nemnsynod.org/ecofaith.html).

PLEASE AVOID USING STYROFOAM WHEN WORKING IN THE CHURCH KITCHEN. THANKS!

THE TREK TO SOLAR PANELS.....CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

At that meeting, one member mentioned that we probably could get the funds needed from older members who have funds available from Required Minimum Distributions from various investments. With that, one member eventually made the first "pledge" commitment and began contacting others for "pledges".

By the Annual Congregational Meeting in February, we had made progress but were not ready to seek approval from the Congregation for the solar array. We discussed the proposal at the meeting, how we were planning to fund the proposal and our expected \$3,200 reduction in annual electricity costs.

Finally, we received commitments totaling \$54,750 including 18 member contributions, a \$2,000 EcoFaith grant, and a \$4,000 grant from our Mission Endowment fund. Then we were ready to seek approval from the Council and the Congregation. A special Congregation meeting was held on June 8th and the proposal was approved after some discussion.

By June 9th we had sufficient funds to sign the contract and pay \$30,600 as a 50% down payment.

The contractor has the necessary application is process, materials ordered, and we are fortunate that the solar array will be in service by the end of the year to qualify for the 30% rebate.

Ministry opportunities at First Lutheran:

If you would like to participate in worship services, call any of the following people and volunteer. Training provided.

Lector: Reading scriptures & the prayers of the Church):

Contact the office (218-927-2028)

Communion assistant: Contact the office (218-927-2028)

Usher: Contact the office (218-927-2028)

Children's sermon: Pastor Reggie (218-927-2028) Sound Technician: Contact the office (218-927-2028) Power Point Technician: Contact the office (218-927-2028)

Video Technician: Dave Sadlowsky (952-221-3861) Worship Committee: Rebecca May (927-3481)

Contemporary worship song leaders/musicians: Pat Perrine (218-428-1884) Pete Lowe (218-831-4210)

Hymn selections: Linda Delaney (927-6237) Altar Guild: Mary Peterson (927-6820) WELCA: Mary Peterson (927-6820)

Dinner at your Door: Carla Hakes (320-333-1876)

Choir: Aaron Perrine ((651)428-9005

Please call me back I'm one of those people who regularly calls for lectors, communion assistants, kitchen help, worship assistants, Sunday coffee hour help, etc. If you're not home, I leave a message on your answering machine. It would be most helpful if you would return my phone call with a yes or no—then I'll know you received my message and it will save me more phone calls. Thank you for making my volunteer job much easier!

New Option: We have a new scheduling program – Ministry Scheduling Pro. Very easy to use and to volunteer for many positions. Contact the office to get signed up.

Support Groups

- 1. Rides for Health (Aitkin Co CARE) 927-4077
- 2. Memory Loss/Caregivers (Aitkin Co CARE)- 1st Wed 1230 pm
- Doughnuts with Dawn (previously memory lane cafe) Maryhill Manor every Wed 1000-1200 pm
- 4. HOPE (healing, opportunity, provided equally) (previously AADA)- domestic violence- Wed 800-900 am for women, Thurs 400-500 pm for teens
- 5. Sexual Violence Resource Center/Support Within Reach-927-6226- Mon and Wed 800 am-500 pm
- 6. Aitkin Co Child Abuse Prevention Council 927-6226
- 7. Diabetes Resources- Riverwood Health Care Center 927-5152
- 8. Suicide Prevention- Aitkin Co Public Health 927-7272
- 9. Crisis Line 1-800-462-5525

STAFF

Pastor Reggie Denton

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Traci Moreland

(Youth Coordinator)

4tracim@gmail.com

Mike Purdy (Custodian)

Rebecca May (Organist)

Sarah Grovogel

(Nursery Facilitator)

Mission Statement

With God's love we embrace one another, our neighbors, and all creation.

Vision Statement

Doing God's Work with Our Hands by Providing:

Spiritual Growth for All

Opportunities for Living Out Our Christian Faith

Support of our Mission and Ministries **Church Values**

TRUST and LOVE in Jesus Christ COMMIT to living God's Word PRACTICE hospitality with welcoming and kindness

> RESPECT and CARE for all people SERVE our community

Live Stream/Recording of every 9:00 a.m. Sunday Service

Can't make it to church? Watch it live.

Missed last week? Catch up by watching the recording.

Want to see it again? Or pass it on....

Go to YouTube - enter First Lutheran Church in Aitkin

Scroll thru and search for the date you are looking for.

Click on play. It's that simple.

How do I turn on subtitles/closed captioning on YouTube?

Steps

1. Open a YouTube video.

2. Click the gear icon in the bottom-right corner of the video player to display the video player settings.

3. Expand the combo box next to Subtitles/CC.

4. Click the desired subtitle language to begin displaying subtitles.

You will have to do this each time with any video.

9:00 a.m. Worship Service is livestreamed on YouTube at First Lutheran Church of Aitkin and broadcast at 10:00 a.m. on KKIN 94.3 FM Aitkin WORSHIP TIMES

All Sundays

In August

9:00 am

Brief Worship service

10:30 am

Wednesday
Services
will resume
in September

NEWSLETTER
ARTICLES

DUE ON THE 15TH OF
EVERY MONTH

church at office all chin.com August 2025

PLEASE NOTE: The church is charged 75 cents for undeliverable mailings. If you do not want to continue receiving this mailing, please request that your name be removed from our list by returning the attached label to First Lutheran Church, 107 2nd St., SE, Aitkin MN 56431, or by emailing the



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